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JOINT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING ADULT EDUCATION IN MAINE

WHEREAS, since 1871, Maine's public schools have supported the development of an adult education system that has grown and adapted to meet the needs of Maine's population at 120 locations throughout the State, to serve more than 117,000 Maine adults annually; and

WHEREAS, adult education programs based in the public school systems are uniquely positioned to provide adults with the opportunity to learn close to where they live in Maine; and

WHEREAS, adult education programs are vital to the economic development of Maine, providing high school completion programs and courses specifically designed to help educate the workforce and prepare Maine adults for success in college; and

WHEREAS, the areas of emphasis in adult education include:

1. College transition programs, based upon collaboration with the Maine Compact for Higher Education, the Maine Community College System and the University of Maine System, which provide career guidance, an orientation to college and refresher and prerequisite classes for aspiring students. Comprehensive adult education college transition programs, such as the Maine College Transition Program, have been successfully piloted over 6 years with assistance from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, the MELMAC Education Foundation and the Betterment Fund, and last year the State of Maine initiated the Maine College Transition Program at 6 sites. The goal is to increase the number of adults in Maine earning college degrees by 10,000 by 2020 through formal programs at more than 30 sites;

2. Direct service to Maine's dislocated workers, more than 3,500 of whom from 100 companies during the past 5 years have been helped;

3. Literacy and English as a Second Language programs, with 15,000 enrollments in 2007, and successful family literacy programs combining adult education and early childhood and parenting instruction;

4. High school completion and GED programs, with 3,108 credentials awarded in Maine in 2006;

5. Career preparation and upgrading courses for Maine workers, with more than 22,000 enrollments in 2006, and programs tailored specifically for Maine businesses, including the implementation of a Work Ready Credential program for Maine employers focusing on "soft skills" for success in the workplace; and

6. Community education courses, which have contributed to the quality of life in Maine communities, offering the opportunity in 2007 for Mainers 18 years of age and older to share talents and learn from others. In several regions, adult education programs are leading the way in developing the creative economy; and

WHEREAS, funding for adult education in Maine is a collaboration involving state subsidies, local taxpayer support, grants, contracts and fees paid by those enrolled in nonacademic courses; now, therefore, be it

That We, the Members of the One Hundred and Twenty-third Legislature now assembled in the First Regular Session, on behalf of the people we represent, take this opportunity to pause to acknowledge and applaud Maine's adult education programs, which uniquely reflect the needs of the communities they serve and provide a vital system of service to the population of the State as new challenges are faced in economic, community and family life; and be it further

That suitable copies of this resolution, duly authenticated by the Secretary of State, be transmitted to the Department of Education.